

the AFIP LETTER



Armed Forces Institute of Pathology
Washington, D.C. 20306-6000

Vol. 153, No. 4
August 1995

AFIP Consultation Committee (from left): Florabel G. Mullick, MD, SES; James C. Durham, COL, MC, USA; Julie C. Fanburg, MD; Donald E. Sweet, MD; William B. Ross, CAPT, MC, USN; Susan L. Abbondanzo, MD and William D. Travis, MD. Not pictured: Hernando Mena, COL, MC, USA, and Henry G. Skelton, CAPT, MC, USN.

THE AFIP IS DEVELOPING NEW and improved methods for providing the best consultation service possible for both military and civilian cases, according to Associate Director Florabel G. Mullick, MD, SES, who directs the Institute's Center for Advanced Pathology. "AFIP staff members have worked diligently to improve how the Institute responds to over 48,000 consultations received each year," she notes. The Institute has especially improved its methods for accessioning and processing cases upon arrival, so that departments can quickly begin the diagnostic review process. "Since 1990, our average turnaround time has improved by five workdays," Dr. Mullick points out. "Of course, we recognize that not every case can be diagnosed without additional tests being completed, but a timely, accurate diagnosis remains our number-one priority. In such instances the responsible pathologist calls the contributor with a preliminary diagnosis."

Dr. Mullick has directed a number of changes in how the AFIP is approaching its consultation service. A key to this effort is creating an atmosphere of change within the Institute to look for ways to improve our consultation practice and to be responsive to the evolving demands of our contributors. The AFIP wants to be poised to adapt to the consultative needs of our pathology colleagues as dramatic changes take place with health care reform.

A new "hotline" (1-800-774-8427) was started for contributors to call with



AFIP Consultation Program responds to contributors *800 Line, personal contact emphasized*

questions about the status of their consultations. This is not primarily designed for contributors to communicate with pathologists about the diagnostic aspects of their cases; rather, it provides a mechanism for drawing attention to administrative issues or problems that may arise. This telephone service is intended to communicate to our contributors that we are eager to be accessible and

to respond to their questions.

Dr. Mullick created a Consultation Committee, chaired by William D. Travis, MD, who also serves as cochair of the Department of Pulmonary and Mediastinal Pathology. The committee, which consists of eight staff pathologists, is looking at ways to improve the Institute's consultation practice. Over the past year,

Continued on page 7

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



AFIP's Consultation Program

I am honored to serve as the new Director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Over the last two months I've had the opportunity to meet with many of our fine professional, technical, and support personnel, and they confirm my view that AFIP has a tremendously strong future ahead of it. We recognize, however, that the Institute also faces numerous challenges in delivering its threefold mission of consultation, education, and research. I'd like to specifically address the topic of consultation.

As military and civilian medicine changes the way health care is delivered in the United States, we're working to change how we do business, too. Last year, our staff of international experts consulted on 48,000 second-opinion cases. Twenty percent of these cases arrived in need of an initial diagnosis, and in another 24% our staff made minor (22%) or major (2%) diagnostic changes.

Continually improving the quality and timeliness of our consultation service is of particular interest to me. Our most important customers are you, our contributors, and we have to provide you with a level of diagnostic expertise that you deserve and need. That's why this month's cover story on AFIP's consultation program is so important.

Under the guidance of Dr. Florabel Mullick, AFIP's Center for Advanced Pathology is continually looking for ways to improve our case-handling methods. In 1994, the Institute established a "Contributor Hotline" (1-800-774-8427) to quickly resolve questions about the status of individual cases. I encourage you to call us during

Spanish "Controversies" course draws record attendance

"CONTROVERSIAS Y ADELANTOS EN PATOLOGIA QUIRURGICA," AFIP's first course presented entirely in Spanish, attracted over 176 participants from 16 different countries to the Caribe Hilton Resort and Casino, San Juan, Puerto Rico, from May 31-June 3, 1995. According to AFIP Associate Director Florabel G. Mullick, MD, SES, who directs the Institute's Center for Advanced Pathology and served as course codirector, the Institute reached out to the vast Spanish-speaking pathology community in Mexico, Central and South America, and Europe. "We wanted to provide as much access to AFIP as possible, especially for the Latin American pathology community," she notes, "and we really succeeded in doing just that."

Course participants took part in a comprehensive pathology overview from AFIP's faculty of experts and noted guest lecturers. "This Spanish course covered topics including gastrointestinal pathology, gynecologic and breast pathology, soft tissue pathology, hematopathology, neuropathology, ophthalmic pathology, pulmonary and mediastinal pathology, endocrine pathology, and dermato-

1996 courses set for
Madrid, Spain and
Guadalajara, Mexico

pathology," she says. Participants and their families had the opportunity to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities in Puerto Rico's tropical climate. "We know that it was an enjoyable experience for everyone who attended."

Clara Heffess, LTC, MC, USA, chief, Division of Endocrine Pathology, Department of Otolaryngic and Endocrine Pathology, and Cesar Moran, Maj, USAF, MC, chief, Division of Mediastinal Pathology, Department of Pulmonary and Mediastinal Pathology, who also served as directors of this course, have agreed to present the next "Spanish Controversies" in Madrid, Spain, and Guadalajara, Mexico, in June and December 1996, respectively. The 1997 course is set for Cartagena, Colombia. Details about the Colombia course will be available in 1996.

regular business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern time) if we can be of any assistance.

The "Consultation Committee," pictured on the cover, has also implemented a number of changes to improve our case-handling methods. Providing you with a timely and accurate diagnosis is imperative, and the committee will continue to look at ways to make our case-handling process even more efficient. Every effort is also made to inform contributors of results, either by faxing reports or by a personal telephone call from the consulting pathologist.

I encourage you to contact me personally with questions or comments

about our consultation service. You can write in care of the Director, AFIP-ZA, Washington, DC, 20306-6000, telephone DSN 662-2111 or commercial at (202) 782-2111, or by e-mail to:

Dickerso@email.afip.osd.mil
I look forward to hearing from you.

Michael J. Dickerson
Col, USAF, MC
The Director

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

Orlando selected to host December Courses - Respiratory Tract & Mediastinum, December 1-3; Oral Pathology, December 4-8

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, has been selected as the site for two AFIP courses in December, according to AFIP Deputy Director Glenn N. Wagner, CAPT, MC, USN.

Surgical Pathology of the Respiratory Tract and Mediastinum will be held December 1-3 at Disney's Contemporary Resort in Lake Buena Vista, followed by the **42nd Annual Course in Oral Pathology** from December 4-8 at the Grosvenor Resort, Walt Disney World® Village, also in Lake Buena Vista. "The first week in December is an excellent time to kick off the holiday season in Orlando," notes CAPT Wagner. "We're taking these two courses to a city known for its delightful fall climate and recreational activities, and this is a great opportunity to combine a quality education experience with an enjoyable family vacation."

Surgical Pathology of the Respiratory Tract and Mediastinum

Directed by William D. Travis, MD, cochair of AFIP's Department of Pulmonary and Mediastinal Pathology, this course is designed to give a current review of controversial surgical pathology topics of the upper and lower respiratory tract and mediastinum. According to Dr. Travis, for the first time this course will also offer microscopic review sessions for two afternoons. "Optional review sessions are available for those who wish to review microscopic slides of teaching cases from the upper and lower respiratory tract and mediastinum," he says. "This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about lung, head and neck, and mediastinal pathology."

The course will run for three half-day sessions at **Disney's Contemporary Resort**, and will consist of a series of presentations on selected topics by AFIP experts and guest faculty members, including **Thomas V. Colby, MD**, Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale, Arizona, and **Anna L. Katzenstein, MD**, Crouse-Irving Memorial Hospital, Syracuse, N.Y. The course is designed primarily for practicing and resident pathologists; however, thoracic

disease physicians would also benefit.

The 42nd Annual Course in Oral Pathology

Grosvenor Resort at Walt Disney World® Village, Orlando, Florida, will host the Oral Pathology course from December 4-8, 1995. According to course codirector Robert B. Brannon, Col, USAF, DC, chair of AFIP's Department of Oral Pathology, the course is designed to provide general dentists and all dental specialists, including residents in oral pathology, with fundamental knowledge of various aspects of oral diseases.

General pathologists, general pathology residents, and other physicians with an interest in diseases of the head and neck area would also find the course beneficial. "Course codirector Robert K. Goode, Col, USAF, DC, and I have chosen a broad range of subjects," he notes, "embracing diseases of the oral mucosa, major and minor salivary glands, jaws (including odontogenic cysts/tumors and fibro-osseous lesions), vesiculoerosive and dermatologic disorders, and oral manifestations of HIV infection and AIDS."

Lectures will be complemented by clinical problem-solving exercises and

elective microscopic-slide laboratories, supplemented by a videodisk with 25,000 clinical and microscopic images. "Our focus will be on the radiographic and clinical presentation of disease with correlation to microscopic features," Col Brannon points out. A combination of AFIP faculty and other well-known experts in the field of oral and maxillofacial pathology will be on hand for this 5-day course. Honored faculty members include **Ronald A. Baughman, DDS**, professor and chairman, Department of Oral Diagnostic Sciences, University of Florida College of Dentistry, and **Charles A. Waldron, DDS**, distinguished professor and dean emeritus, Emory University School of Dentistry, who has long been recognized as one of the foremost oral and maxillofacial pathologists in the world.

For further information about these two courses please see the application form on page 10, or call AFIP's Center for Advanced Medical Education (CAME) at **1-800-577-3749** or commercial at (301) 427-5231.

Main Street at WALT DISNEY WORLD®

